

## **17<sup>th</sup> Steering Group Meeting**

Priority Area 9 “Investing in People and Skills”

Date: October 25<sup>th</sup> 2019

Venue: 32 Puskin street, Bristol Hotel, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova

Participants: see *Annex 1*

For the minutes: Tudor MANCAS

### **Chair:**

-Mrs Anna GHERGANOVA, PA9 coordinator, Ministry of Health, Labor and Social Protection, Republic of Moldova;

-Mr Jürgen SCHICK, PA9 coordinator, Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, Austria;

-Mr Roland HANAK, PA9 coordinator, Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, Austria;

-Mrs Ludmila PAVLOV, PA9 coordinator, Ministry of Education, Culture and Research, Republic of Moldova;

-Mrs Valeryia IZHYK, PA9 coordinator, Ministry of Education and Science, Ukraine.

### **Welcome and Introduction**

Gherganova, Schick, Hanak and Pavlov welcomed participants and the new PAC from Ukraine. The opening session was closed with a short introduction round by the 18 participants.

### **Adoption of the Agenda**

The Agenda was adopted unanimously.

### **Reform Priorities in Education and Labor Market Policy in each Country**

**HU:** TOLGYES Gabriella mentioned that regarding the labour market policy the most challenging question is still the labour shortage, labour demand, which is present parallel with unemployment (3.4%, 157 thousand). Employment level is high - 70.2%, more than 4.5 million people are working. It means that Hungary has 30% reserve:

- pensioners: 40.000 are under 65 who could be involved into the labour market
- women: 400.000 less women are working than man. 150.000 could be involved.

Number of inactive persons is 1.7 million (pensioners, students, women in childcare, unemployed)  
According to expectations employment rate could be increased by 4% which means additional 250-300 thousand workplace.

Measures used in order to increase employment and reduce unemployment:

- Job creation support for SMS: 600 new jobs, 98 supported firms, 1100 preserved jobs.
- Summer Student work programme in 2019: 30.500 students between 16-25 years.
- Support of mobility by building workers hostels: 2300 places for 14 applicants
- Program for restructuring PES: 77 thousand job placements in a year.
- Involvement of disabled: 150 thousand disabled persons are working at the moment. Another 150.000 could be involved
- Public Employment: Number of public employees is decreasing.

**Vocational Training:** Motto: "One profession is needed"

- VT must be attractive;
- Labour demand should be matched;
- It must ensure proper living standard and carrier;
- Individual needs should be satisfied;
- Modification of National Training Record (List): From 760 profession now 174 basic professions were declared
- Strategy for Vocational and Adult Training was accepted in first Q of 2019;
- Changes are needed;
- Innovation is priority in school education, vocational education, adult training- like dual training, in which 9000 firms and 55 thousand students taking part.
- Students who want to learn professions after the 8. class of primary school can choose 5 yearlong Technic school or 3 yearlong vocational school (From Technic higher education is available);
- Restructuring in ministries: New Ministry for Innovation and Technology receives more and more areas in the field of higher education and VET.

**SK: AUXTOVA Lucia** mentioned the challenge of improving attractiveness of teacher profession and quality of teachers in the Slovak Republic. Therefore, one of the main priorities for Slovakia is to make the teacher salaries more competitive on the labour market. Teacher salaries were increased by 10% in January 2019 and further increase by 10% is planned in January 2020. New

Act on pedagogical employees was approved and submitted to the National Council and entered into force in September 2019. It reforms the certification process of teachers, which is linked to statutory salary increases. Certification will focus on practical verification of teachers' acquired skills and competences. Mrs Auxtova mentioned as new measures the modernisation and reconstruction of student housing infrastructure, which is now in progress. In 2018, 20 million euro was allocated for these purposes. For 2019 further funding is planned to continue the process so that cumulative allocation reaches 50 million euro. Another priority is to attract foreign students to study in Slovakia, which will be a part of a planned strategy for internationalisation of higher education.

**KALMANOVA Drahusa** mentioned about positive labor market developing in Slovakia in compare with improvements across other European labor markets. Further increases in employment rate are needed for further economic growth; however, the labor supply has hit its limits. Labor supply shortages already present an acute risk factor for further economic growth. One way of solving this situation by employers is hiring foreign labor force. Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs and Family prepared *The Strategy for Labor Mobility of Foreigners in the Slovak Republic*, which was adopted by the Slovak government. The material elaborates measures aimed at resolving labour market shortages in certain areas. Labour market shortages and negative trends stemming from demographic factors and population aging might be resolved through the employment of third-country nationals, preferably those who are high-skilled, but not exclusively. The strategy calls for various temporary measures, with the possibility of further assessment of these measures in the future in accordance with the needs of the labour market. The strategy also identifies long-term measures, for instance updating the Migration Policy of the Slovak Republic with an Outlook to 2020 or the Integration Policy of the Slovak Republic. The new strategy also touches upon the integration of economic migrants, with an emphasis given to the local dimension of integration. The other key problem of the labor market structure is the situation of low skilled unemployed. Measures aimed at helping this category of citizens are implemented through projects of support. She presented 2 ongoing projects:

-The national project „**By Practice for employment**”

The aim is to provide young people under 29 years old with the opportunity to acquire or increase and deepen their professional skills, knowledge and practical experience that correspond to their level of education through form of mentored training and practice at an employer who will create a job for this purpose;

-The national project “**Reconciliation of family and working life**”

Eligible target group are jobseekers with parental responsibilities respectively with an emphasis on persons with problems in reconciliation of work and family life who are registered as jobseekers for at least 3 months. The main activity - providing a financial contribution to the employer to support the application of flexible forms of work, who will recruit the jobseeker from the eligible target group for a minimum period of 3 months.

**UA: TERESHCHENKO Igor** mentioned about the adoption of new Employment Law, which focuses on digitalising of employment services and promoting the social dialogue in the labor market, passing from passive to active measures. Another priority is development of occupational standards, 14 new occupational standards have been approved. There is a problem with funding of occupational standards development. Another priority is revising the National Classificatory of Occupations in line with the International Classificatory of Occupations and development of the recognition of qualifications system.

**IZHYK Valeryia** talked about Education Reform System in 2018 "New Ukrainian School". A World Bank project to optimize the school network and change the school content is implemented. VET education to 2027 - the "EU for skills" project was mentioned. In high education area, Ukraine changed the financing formula / universities optimization. Businesses are ready to pay bigger salaries to qualified personnel.

**RO: CLAPAN Carmen** presented an overview of the results of the Romanian Presidency at the Council of the European Union. In the field of education and training, Romania's contribution to the creation of the European Education Area was reflected by the motto "Connecting Education", focusing on the interaction of 3 key aspects: Inclusion, Mobility and Excellence. All events have contributed to the continuation of the steps regarding the establishment of the European Education Area, as well as to outline the new Strategic Framework regarding the European cooperation in the field of education and training - post 2020.

Three important documents were adopted at the Education Council, in Brussels, in May 2019:

- the Council Recommendation on a comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning languages;
- the Council Recommendation on high quality early childhood and care systems;
- the Council Conclusions on upskilling pathways.

She also mentioned the Meeting of the General Directors for VET (Alba-Iulia, March 2019) that

covered topics and discussions on the future of vocational education and training after 2020, the role of key competences and excellence in the development of education and training systems, which are preparing the young generation for a continuous changing labor market and promoting entrepreneurship. Other events organized by PRES RO: PLA in VET “Innovative regional approaches to ensure excellence in VET”, (Timisoara, February 2019); Conference on “Combining digital and entrepreneurial skills to support innovative education and training”, (Brussels, May 2019); the 7<sup>th</sup> CEDEFOP Seminar “Development of coherent approaches for upskilling pathways” (June 2019); Informal Study-visit of the Education Committee (Constanta, June 2019),

Concerning national priorities and developments, she mentioned:

- the project “Relevant Curriculum, Open Education for all” (CRED), financed by the European Social Funds (ESF) to support the ongoing curricular reform (<https://www.educred.ro>);
- the project "Strategic framework for educational infrastructure and support in strategic planning of vocational education and training - INFRAED" (<http://sig.forhe.ro>; [www.alegetidrumul.ro](http://www.alegetidrumul.ro), [www.infraed.ro](http://www.infraed.ro)).

**HR: REINER Petra** stated that the general and vocational education reform is ongoing. The comprehensive curricular reform has continued in the 2019/2020 school year. The establishment of the system of digitally mature schools (the e-Schools project) is focused on full digital transformation of schools. In the field of VET, the completion of the process of establishing regional competence centres is underway (25 regional competence centres in 5 priority sectors have been established). The role of the competence centres will be to make a significant contribution to the provision of a qualified workforce, and the emphasis is put on work-based learning.

The draft proposal for the Adult Education Act has been prepared. It is aimed at ensuring the quality of adult education and recognition of non-formal and informal learning. Also, curricula will be developed for the development of basic digital, literacy and mathematical skills of adults.

The implementation of the Croatian Qualifications Framework is ongoing, through preparing occupational and qualifications standards.

The draft proposal for the Act on Quality Assurance in Science and Higher Education has been prepared. Its aim is to improve procedures for external evaluation of study programmes.

The improvement of the quality and increasing the share of work-based learning in higher education is carried out through an ESF project. Project proposals are currently being evaluated and higher education institutions will be provided with funds to implement activities related to developing work-based learning models, by developing learning outcomes and procedures for

their evaluation, as well as by improving mentoring.

**RAJCIC Luca** mentioned that in the labour market are registered positive trends. Low quality of employment, long term unemployment of low skilled persons, high share of NEETS and migration of labour force is still characteristic for labour market of Croatia. Have been developed guidelines for active labour market policy.

Croatia is receiving funding from ESF for active labour market measures. Qualification standards are developed with financial support from ESF. Will be supported youth employment initiatives in 2020-2021.

**MD: PAVLOV Ludmila** commented on:

- the revision of the curricula in primary and gymnasium level;
- the approval of the modular curriculum on "The Basics of Entrepreneurship" for VET system;
- participation to the development of Torino Process Report 2018-2020 that states current situation in VET system, labour market, national economy;
- 23 curricula for professions/specialities acquired in VET system (20 curricula for Post-Secondary VET and 3 curricula for Secondary VET) approved in 2019;
- on the quality assurance system in VET in 2018, 2 VET public institutions were externally evaluated. 17 VET public institutions accredited in 2019. The VET institutions will be able to organize the admission process only after the official accreditation or at least based on the self-evaluation report submitted to ANACEC.
- was developed the National Qualification Framework and created the National Register of Qualifications. For 2020-2025, 160 qualification standards will be revised and 50 qualification standards will be developed for levels 3-5 of NQF;
- the Regulation on validation of non-formal and informal education will be piloted in 4 VET institutions. Also related to lifelong learning, important methodologies were approved, like: the methodology for the development of the professional continuous training programs for the VET teaching staff; the methodology for the development of professional continuous training and curricula within the lifelong learning program. The concept of adults' education through the lifelong learning is under development. 43.958 VET students enrolled for 2019-2020.
- the specialization areas of the CoVEs were approved. CoVEs in cooperation with the affiliated VET institutions will ensure the implementation of their functions:
- HE the main priorities: quality assurance; curricula revision; internationalization of HE; revision of the network of HE; development of NQF.

**GHERGANOVA Anna** stated that low labor market indicators are maintained in the Republic of Moldova. The number of active population of Moldova is around 1 million persons. The labor force participation rate - 43,4 %, employment rate – 41,4 %. Share of employed people in agriculture is 21,9 %. In service sector is employed around 56,5 % of population. Unemployment rate – 4,5 %. The labor force migration continues. Local partnerships for employment are being developed in the rural areas, supported by ILO. Local partnerships for employment are an innovative approach for collaboration at local level of different actor as: local authorities, financial institutions, social partners, etc. Priorities:

- Developing a new Informational system for NEA;
- Digitalizing of employment services provision;
- Improve the organization and functioning of NEA;
- Adopting the new regulation on private employment agencies;
- Capacity building for Labor Market Observatory;
- Capacity building for Sectorial Skills Councils.

**AT: SCHICK Jürgen** stated that new legislative acts have been adopted by the Austrian Parliament, i.a. an amendment of the Educational Investment Law regarding the expansion of all-day school forms and amendments to the School Organisation Act and the School Teaching Act. A new system for national performance measurements was introduced with the aim to create an evidence base for supporting planning, teaching development and school quality work. Furthermore a new Quality Framework for schools was elaborated and a new system of education monitoring is under development.

Overall, Austria's education policy focusses on raising the levels of performance and education of pupils, expanding equal opportunities in education and ensuring effective structures and processes in school organization and education administration.

**HANAK Roland** stated that the labor force increased by 1,2% (+48.000 people out of around 4,1 million); This increase results among others from a high number of foreign workers, most of them coming from Germany and other EU countries. There is especially a lack of labour force in tourism sector.

An important recent project of the Austrian Public Employment Service (AMS) is the development and implementation of a statistical system, which divides job seekers into three groups: those with good job market opportunities, those with medium and those with low prospects. This system will facilitate the work of the AMS employees, the decision how to support a job seeker



will be still be by AMS employees.

A focus lies on the support of youth, there is an obligation to attend education or training until the age of 18 and there is a guarantee from the public employment service to get a qualification until the age of 25. Another project was Aktion 20,000. The aim was to create 20,000 jobs for long-term unemployed people 50+ per year in municipalities, non-profit support organizations and companies (no existing jobs should be replaced).

### ***State of Play PA9: Recent projects and Events***

**GHERGANOVA** informed the participants about the workshop on skills development, that took place in Chisinau, in June 2019.

**WILLSBERGER** informed about the DTP-PAC application for 2020-2022, which has been submitted by the Austrian Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection as Lead Partner on 7<sup>th</sup> of October 2019. The Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine will be financing project partner within this project. Moldova will participate as associated partner. The main activities of the DTP-project are:

- Coordination: maintaining the Steering Group of PA 9 as the main mode of coordination (network of national counterparts relevant to the Priority Area Coordinators);
- Cooperation: Deepen the know-how transfer and support to policy development and cooperation among institutions through stakeholder conferences, thematic workshops, peer learning etc.
- Communication and information: To raise public awareness and to inform stakeholders about ongoing activities of PA9 there will be a continuing update of the PA9 Website, PA9-Folders, PR materials etc.

WILLSBERGER informed the participants about the Network Meeting of ESF Managing Authorities in the Danube Region in Sofia on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> of October 2019. The Meeting aimed at identifying policy areas and necessary factors for successful transnational cooperation in the ESF Plus 2021-2027 in the Danube Region. A Vision Paper was developed, which sets out the general vision of the network, including concrete steps and topics to be addressed.

Furthermore, on the second DTP call, the following 3 projects were selected to submit a project proposal till November:

- SPESL (early school leavers)
- Yes Rural (Facilitating entrepreneurship for less educated young people living in less



developed rural areas)

- DREAM ROAD (Roma inclusion)

**SCHICK** informed about the 7<sup>th</sup> edition of the e-Twinning Danube Region Conference that took place in Vienna, in June 2019. The event brought together 48 teachers from 12 Danube region countries. The topic of the conference was „School cooperation in the Danube Region: Experiences and future actions“. The conference was a big success – 11 new projects have been registered and each participant is involved in at least one project.

**ZISIMOS** informed about the VET vision developed based on the Riga conclusions and opportunities for next collaboration under the Erasmus Programme, which will have doubled budget.

**WILLSBERGER** informed about the **Danube Region Monitor**: The revised report was sent to the SG Members for comments. The final report should be ready in November. Within the next PAC support project an online data base with the indicators of the Danube Region Monitor should be developed and continuously updated.

**SCHICK** concluded on **the 7<sup>th</sup> Stakeholder Conference on October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019** that the concept of CoVEs is of high relevance for EUSDR cooperation and that PA9 should serve as a facilitator towards a common DR-platform of CoVEs. Continued cooperation with the ETF would be appreciated in this regard.

**ZISIMOS** mentioned that ETF is ready to support CoVEs and suggested collaborating also with CEDEFOP in this regard.

**SCHICK** informed about the state of play on Revision of the **2010 EUSDR Action Plan**. A Consolidated Input for the EUSDR action plan revision has been prepared by the DSP and presented to EC after an endorsement by the NCs. EC developed the first draft of the revised EUSDR action plan, which was discussed with NCs and PACs in a workshop in September. EC will redraft the document based on comments of NCs and PACs to be submitted by 31 October. A new timeline for the revision of the final draft was established with the new Action Plan to be adopted by February 2020.

**Main outcomes:**

- SG members agreed on the contribution of PA9 for consolidated output for revision of EUSDR action Plan, particularly on proposed targets;
- A new thematic issue has been proposed by Croatia to be included under Action 7: Lifelong Learning and Learning Mobility, which reflects the priorities of the Croatian Presidency of the Council of the EU regarding promoting balanced mobility and brain circulation as well as reducing brain drain;
- SG members approved the revised Work programme of PA9;
- SG members agreed on collaboration for CoVEs development.

## Annex 1

### Participants of the SG meeting (in alphabetycal order):

1. AUXTOVA Lucia (SK)
2. CLAPAN Carmen (RO)
3. CRACIUN Cecilia (RO)
4. GHERGANOVA Anna (MD)
5. HANAK Roland (AT)
6. IZHYK Valeriya (UA)
7. KALMANOVA Drahusa (SK)
8. MANCAS Tudor (MD)
9. MATOSIN Ivana (HR)
10. MILICEVIC Filip (HR)
11. PAVLOV Ludmila (MD)
12. RAJCIC Luka (HR)
13. REINER Petra (HR)
14. SCHICK Jürgen (AT)
15. TERESHCHENKO Igor (UA)
16. TOLGYES Gabriella (HU)
17. WILLSBERGER Barbara (AT)
18. ZISIMOS Georgios (ETF)

### 17<sup>th</sup> Steering Group Meeting of PA 9 List of participants

	Name	Signature
1.	Andriana Parlor, Ministry of Education, Culture and Research	
2.	Anna Gheorghiu, PA 9 coordinator	
3.	Valerija Izgork, PAC	
4.	Dionys Schick, PAC, BOPWIF	
5.	Roland HANAK, PAC, BMASGK	
6.	BARBARA WILLSBERGER CRP MR	
7.	GABRIELLA TOLUTES, Ministry of Education	
8.	DRAGUŠA KALMANOVA-Min. of LABOUR and SOCIAL AFFAIRS - Slovakia	
9.	LUCIA AUSTOVA, MOE, SLOVAK REPUBLIC	
10.	Igor Tereshchenko, MSPU, Ukraine	
11.	CRISTIAN CECILIA, ONASPT, Romania	
12.	CARMEN CLAPAN, Ministry of National Education, Romania	
13.	GEORGIOS ZISIMOS, Education, Croatia	
14.	PETRA REINER, Ministry of Science and Education, Croatia	
15.	IVANA NATOČIN, MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND PENSION SYSTEM CRO	
16.	LINA ROPOK, MLPS	
17.	FILIP MILICEVIC, MLPS, CROATIA	
18.	Tudor MANCAȘ, APS Project Coordinator	